Half of What I Know - Artist: OB Branán

I write of steel and sunrise,
Of wages and the rain.
But telling half of what I know
Keeps you safe from all my pain.
The lads all laugh at lunchtime,
We talk of home and tea.
But no one speaks the silence
That settles in at three.

I send my love in folded pages,
Stamped with hope and pride.
I leave the tears between the lines
Where only ghosts reside.
You'll read of work and weather,
Of the pub and Sunday show.
But I'll keep the rest in silence -
That's half of what I know.

I met a girl from Derry,
She smiled and looked my way.
I told her I was from Meenaward,
She said, "You're far away."
I watched her walk through Digbeth,
Her coat a shade of blue.
And thought of all the things I'd say
If I could say them true.

I send my love in folded pages,
Stamped with hope and pride.
I leave the tears between the lines
Where only truth resides.
You'll read of work and weather,
Of the pub and Sunday Mass.
But I'll keep the rest in silence -
That's half of what you asked.

Your letter came last Tuesday,
Said the dog is gettin' old.
You asked if I'd be home this year,
Before the winter cold.
I stared out past the rooftops,
Where the Brummie fog hangs low.
And whispered to the bricks and steel,
The half I'll never show.
I send my love in folded pages,
Stamped with hope and pride.
I leave the tears between the lines
Where only sorrow hides.
You'll read of work and weather,
Of the pub and Sunday show.
Mum I'll keep the rest in silence -
That's half of what I know.

[Outro softer]
Yes, I'll keep the rest in silence -
That's half of what I know ..... [fiddle solo to fade]
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Half of What I Know - song notes

From the fog-draped rooftops of Birmingham to the moss-toned fields of Donegal, Half Of What I Know is a letter never fully sent - a ballad of silence, survival, and the ache between lines. OB Branán sings in a gentle baritone, his voice a hearthlight flickering through steel and sunrise, wages and rain. The song unfolds like a folded page, stamped with pride, each verse a ritual of restraint.

This is not a lament - it's a mercy. A slow, melancholic ballad where guitar and fiddle trace the contours of memory and echo the hours between laughter and longing. The lads joke at lunch, but no one speaks of the silence that settles in at three. Love appears in a blue coat on Digbeth's streets, but even that moment is half-swallowed by distance.

Branán's lyrics hold back as much as they reveal. He writes of work and weather, of Sunday Mass and pub shows, but leaves the sorrow tucked between the lines—where only ghosts reside. It's a song for mothers who wait, for dogs growing old, for sons who whisper to bricks and steel instead of saying what they truly feel.

Half Of What I Know is a scroll of emotional stewardship, a testament to the emigrant's quiet strength. It belongs to those who carry legacy in silence, who send love in folded pages, and who keep the rest in hush

This song my book and other material can be found at: Owen Brennan Archive at:

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